



STATE SENATOR NAN RICH  
LEGISLATIVE UPDATE  
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**WITH OPENING OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION,  
IT'S TIME FOR THE GOVERNOR TO GET REAL**

*With the opening of the annual Legislative Session this week, the Governor delivered his annual State of the State address. As the Senate Democratic Leader, it was my duty to deliver our party's response to this speech. What follows is an excerpt of that speech. If you'd like to read the full text of the speech, please visit [www.flsenate.gov/Senators/s34](http://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/s34), or go to [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUIWt1i5AwI](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUIWt1i5AwI) to view video of the speech.*

When Governor Rick Scott was campaigning around the state last summer and fall, his mantra was, "Let's get to work." It was a catchy campaign slogan, that played on people's desire to get out of the recession, and return to the economic growth we once enjoyed. But after watching Governor Scott over his first few months in office, many of us can't help but wonder just who Governor Scott is getting to work *for*?

With policies that look and sound a lot like the same trickle-down policies of the previous Republican administrations that squeezed budgets for education and health care, while handing out massive tax cuts for the wealthy and big business, it sure doesn't seem like it's average Floridians the Governor is working for.

And unfortunately, along with reckless deregulation of financial institutions, these are the same policies that set the stage for the severe economic crisis we now face. Governor Scott's apparent commitment to follow the same course promises more of the same "voodoo economics" – as the first President Bush once denounced them – and puts all of us at great peril.

He is also proposing requiring state and local government employees to return 5 percent of their salaries into the state pension fund, even though the Florida Retirement System is one of the top performing pension funds in the country. This isn't because we're in danger of being

unable to meet our pension obligations, but because Governor Scott wants to give large corporations and other wealthy CEOs more of our tax dollars and eliminate the small share of our tax burden these same corporations currently pay.

Keep in mind, this is after 12 years of Republican rule in Florida that gave these same special interests \$19 billion in tax loopholes. And that \$19 billion in tax give-aways has run up our state's debt to almost \$29 billion that Florida taxpayers now owe. That means every single Floridian, even those still in Pampers, are saddled with an annual bill of \$1,500 for years to come.

Large corporations do not need more of our tax dollars, as Governor Scott would have us believe. They are already sitting on billions of dollars they are reluctant to put to good use by investing in job creation. With one of the best business tax climates in the country, we should have one of the lowest unemployment rates and job creation should be booming.

But it's not. More than 1 million out-of-work Floridians and hundreds of thousands of under-employed Floridians can attest to that. And while Republican politicians vilify teachers, nurses, firefighters, police officers and other public servants for their hard-earned pensions, they turn a blind eye to the erosion of the middle class and the ever widening gap between average workers and CEO's who make more in one bonus than their average employee will make in a lifetime.

Floridians, like the rest of America, should be working their way into the middle class, not falling out of it. But that's what's going on. In less than 3 months, Republican Governor Rick Scott singlehandedly jeopardized up to **70,000** jobs by slamming the brakes developing high speed rail, and proposing the firing of almost 13,000 front line public servants desperately needed in times like these.

This is not Democrats' idea of "let's get to work." If that's what Governor Scott means, I say, "Let's get real."

Let's get real by developing a fair tax structure that does not penalize small businesses, but opens more pathways to creating them.

Let's get real by harnessing the power of government to create or back low-interest loans especially geared for small businesses to expand and grow.

Let's get real by committing tax dollars to community colleges and state universities so that Floridians can learn new skills and future scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs can flourish.

Let's get real by rebuilding our crumbling infrastructure, so that goods and people can move quickly and efficiently, and we can put thousands of Floridians back to work in the process.

Let's get real by keeping well-trained employees who forego high wages to serve the public, many of them in dangerous conditions.

And let's get real by fulfilling our obligation to preserve the Everglades and all of Florida's natural treasures that both enrich our quality of life, and make our tourism industry thrive.

These are the values that Democrats have always stood for, and which will continue to guide us as we get to work for all Floridians.



As always, I appreciate the opportunity to serve as your State Senator. If you have any comments or questions on any issue related to Florida government, please feel free to contact my office at (954) 747-7933 or email at [rich.nan.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:rich.nan.web@flsenate.gov).